



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



**MADONNA OF THE ROCKS**  
By Leonardo da Vinci



## INDUCTIONS TO PICTURES

Leonardo da Vinci quaintly tells in his "Treatise on Painting," how the inventive powers may be stimulated "by looking attentively at old and smeared walls, or stones and veined marbles of various colors, where you may fancy that you see several compositions, landscapes, battles, figures in quick motion, strange countenances, and dresses, with an infinity of other objects." Such habits of observation, although he calls them "trifling, almost laughable," were evidently influential in creating his wizard forms of loveliness, his haunted caves and grottoes, for whose direct prototypes we search vainly in nature, however plausible they seem.

In the work of many artists we find evidence, not alone of a study of nature, but a recognition of a deep-seated kinship of each form with all others. In such work, one figure may suggest the whole moving world from which it came; a thought to which Walter Pater gives matchless development in his "Studies of Greek Sculpture."

This phase of art—poetic, intangible—is still, as Leonardo suggests, dependent upon observation, the keen use of the physical sense. The Phidian race—since the day when one fashioned the active Tenean Apollo, and another the pensive Shepherd of Orchomenos—had been learning what forms, lines, curves, and angles are pleasing, soothing, exciting; what alliance there is between the emotional inner life and the visible world about us. Their myth-makers had seen gods as trees walking; Syrinx moving and singing among the reeds; Triton riding with militant noise upon the waves; Venus rising from the breaking foam; all, from the stars of heaven to the flowers of the earth, every sound, every sight, every movement of the air, became life to those who observed. They saw themselves reflected in nature, like Narcissus in the pool. They faded into nature as Daphne into the tree. They emerged from it as Proserpina and Adonis with the flowers. They were cradled in it as Diana in the crescent moon.

And Phidias, like all greatest masters, comes equipped, not alone by personal observation and thought, but enriched by a cumulative inheritance from his race. His comprehensive observation, his correlation of details, hides the beautiful things of nature; the sylvan and the sunny, among the deeper meanings of his gods. In the gracious forms of the human body are remembered the slopes of hills, the boles and limbs of trees, the curl of waves, and subtly shifting horizon lines.

A peculiar temperament is perhaps required for this power of fusion, transmutation, metamorphosis, in dealing with materials gleaned from nature. It is this power to which Taine refers in speak-

ing of the Leda of Leonardo da Vinci: "Nowhere is the mystery of ancient days, the profound relation between man and animal, the vague pagan and philosophic sentiment of the unity and universality of life expressed with more accurate research."

Those who have dreamed out the human possibilities in the shifting shadow and light of a bed of coals hail with instant recognition the work of Arnold Böcklin of Basle. With him rocks, trees, and people seem convertible forms. There is in the Munich Schach Gallery a picture of a nymph, a triton, and a sea-serpent on a rock, partly emerged from the waves. The same sort of line and form runs through both waves and figures, as though the shifting and heaving of the water, seen against the far, opalescent sky, had developed under the keenly observant eye of the painter into higher life, the animal and human form. In the same gallery is "Pan Frightening a Goatherd." At the noon hour—his own by right—a rock on the hilltop has changed itself to the veritable shape of the "Great God." The goatherd startled at the apparition runs with his hairy followers, yet with all his haste seems but a passing shadow, a visual effect, a phantom, but half evoked from "the dust of the ground." In the "Dragon's Cave" the monster leans forth from his cleft in the wall of the dark chasm, yet seems wholly a part of the moist, ridgy rock, while the mediæval caravan, hastening past the point of danger, is but like animated drops from the mountain waterfall.

We are not of the age of myth-makers; yet one who, like Böcklin, throws himself back into nature, finds her to-day singularly human. Within the compass of a few acres one may find, perhaps, no ghostly suggestions of human life, but in their stead, reflections of various phases of humor and thought. Thus, having read human life into nature, we may conversely read nature into human life.

If I sought to express a moment of jubilant power in the human heart, I would find the mate to the mood in the strong, upward slope of a certain familiar hill; upon it streams the sun, approaching noon; trees girdle its base, and the farther hills sink, serried, beyond it; waves of summer heat rustle the glistening wires of grass that clothe it. Seeking the mood of the deep power of love, I would find within the same acre, toward eventide, a glen, close-clasped between hills, where water trickles among roots of weeds, and the fading light is faint and sickly through the full leafage of summer; here, oppressed with the heaviness of love, the lone voice of the thrush startles and masters and leads the dream of sweetness. Or, again; when life feels itself old, and nearing the peace of completion, there is autumn afternoon on the gentle slope of another hill; here the poke-berries droop their heads with ripeness, and around the hoar oak trunk are massed its leaves, like a vision of its past; the light of day penetrates here fully, though softened by October haze into a tender glory.

Thus in nature, there are color schemes, mated with consistent

forms, which would inevitably come as memories of things observed, to the thoughtful artist. Though his theme dealt not in landscape whatsoever, something of this atmosphere, color, form, would enwrap his emotions, and guide his vision as he endeavored to express, however abstractly, power, love, age. Even were he to deal with non-pictorial composition, designs, for instance, to accompany these three words as titles, would he not recall the type of form in nature which seemed harmonious to them? There were the intricate, throbbing forms and dominant dark of the inclosed glen, which meant love; the unobstructed and ascending curve of the hill, which stood for power; and the finer drawn contrasts of light and dark, the clearly felt contrasts of upright and prone, something in the way those gray tree trunks met and clung to the earth, which indicated age. Surely in all this, nature is still the friend, brother, and god of man.

There is little need, however, to study who the countlessly varied forms of the world about us find affinities with thought and feeling. If ever the love of form for form's sake has crossed our minds, the god within us will teach us, when we have need, how and why and where to use our treasures; how to make them a body for thought. If our memories were stored with such graces of form and glories of color, could we, if we would, keep them out from the work of our hands?

The comprehension of the humanness of nature, through the study of her visible forms, becomes the induction, the entrance, to pictures not only for the artist, but for all who love art. Truth to Nature grows to be a term of immense width when we know and dwell in the manifold outer world. Poetry and music may penetrate farther into realms of "pure spirit," but the very life of art is that ever-present and most complex of all riddles, the tenure of soul on matter, and of matter on soul; her function, like that of life itself, is the wedding of antagonisms by which the invisible is incarnate; the imperishable becomes mortal.

MARY AUGUSTA MULLIKIN.

